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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "NAVY WILL HAVE TO CLEAN UP YARD EVEN IF IT CLOSES  
INCLUDES ARSENIC, LEAD AND A GERMAN SUB" NSY PORTSMOUTH ME  
1/26/1994  
FOSTER'S DAILY DEMOCRAT

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Democrat Staff Writer

KITTERY, Maine - The Navy will be required to complete cleanup operations at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard even if the facility appears on the next base closure

More on  
shipyard,  
Page 11.

list, area residents were told at a public workshop Tuesday night.

The Navy is currently in the process of studying 13 potential hazardous waste sites at the shipyard to determine the need for cleanup of chemical contamination.



This contamination includes arsenic found in the surface soils near residential quarters, as well as cadmium and lead in a former scrap yard at the facility.

The shipyard is required under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act to clean up

contamination from past hazardous waste practices. Even if the yard is ordered to shut down during the 1995 base closure process, the Navy will have to continue funding cleanup efforts there, officials said.

"The Department of Defense is committed to clean up the sites," Jim Tayon of the shipyard's environmental affairs office told about 40 people attending the public session at the Kittery Lions hall.

Navy spokeswoman Debbie Carlson noted there is also funding for environmental cleanup provided in the base closure process. The bases selected for closure determine the actual amount of funding set aside for cleanup, she said.

The workshop Tuesday was held to provide information about media protection standards being proposed by the Navy for elements of the environment being studied during the cleanup process.

These elements of the environment - or media - being studied are soil, air, groundwater, surface water and sediment. The Navy has proposed standards in an attempt to measure the human health and environment risk factors for contaminating chemicals.

The discussion during the 2½-hour session touched on several other topics as well.

The arsenic found in surface soils is a minute quantity, and would only be considered a risk if a child ate a certain amount of dirt every day for 25 years, according to Tayon.

Of the 30 samples which were taken at the shipyard, only two approached the standards, and they may have to be rechecked, he added. The arsenic could be from old pesticides or herbicides which were once used there, Tayon said.

"We don't know where it came from," he said.

The scrap yard and adjacent residential areas will require further cleanup, according to Eileen Mahoney, a Philadelphia contractor hired by the Navy to take part in the study.

However, she said the air and ponds at the shipyard were found to be safe, and while groundwater samples exceeded the standards, the groundwater is not considered a risk because it is not used for drinking.

The salvage yard was capped last year by a cover of puncture-proof fabric, a clay ceiling layer, another layer of the fabric and rock, Tayon said. Existing gaps will have to be filled in the spring, he added.

The cap is only a temporary measure, Tayon said.

Another area of concern is the Jamaica Island landfill, where a study is being conducted to determine the possible seepage of chemical contaminants into the estuary of the Piscataqua River.

Mercury waste has been buried in concrete blocks in the landfill, and a one-man German submarine is buried there as well, according to Tayon.

Shipyard historian Jim Dolph said this morning the World War II Molch-type midget submarine was captured during the war and sent to the shipyard, where it was placed on display near the gymnasium.

Over the years it rusted and decayed to the point where it was beyond salvaging, Dolph said. The submarine, which was about 7 meters long and could travel 6 knots underwater, carried two torpedoes and was used toward the end of World War II against Allied supply lines off the coast of Europe.

Navy scientist Robert K. Johnston said chemical concentrations in the lower estuaries show elevated levels of lead, chromium and mercury.

Researchers must determine the source of the chemicals and whether the concentrations are at harmful levels. They are currently looking for indications of a potential problem, Johnston said.

Standards will be proposed for the offshore portion of the study at a later date. Tuesday's meeting was scheduled to discuss proposed standards involving the onshore portion.

However, Kittery resident and Southern Maine Technical College senior Mark Lipoma, who is studying environmental technology, said offshore contamination levels are his biggest concern.

"I think that's what a lot of the concerns were tonight," Lipoma said.

The college student said he is adopting a "wait-and-see attitude" for the time being, although he is impressed with the work done by the various organizations involved in the effort.

"I thought they presented it very well," he said.

Ernest Waterman of the Environmental Protection Agency emphasized that the media protection standards are only in draft form, and must be approved by both the EPA and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. A 45-day public comment period following approval could begin as early as late February.

Copies of the proposal are available for review at the public libraries in Kittery and Portsmouth, N.H.

DOVER, N.H., WEDNESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 26, 1994

**Navy will have to clean up yard even if it closes**  
Includes arsenic, lead and a buried German sub